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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Food Distribution Administration
Nutrition and Food Conservation Branch
Nutrition in Industry Division

Reserve

SURVEY OF RESTAURANT FACILITIES IN

NORFOLK AND PORTSMOUTH, VA.

The survey was conducted in order to determine whether public eating facilities were adequate under present conditions in these areas and, to arrive at the most practicable method whereby existing facilities, if found insufficient, could be expanded to meet the needs of the increased population.

The survey was made on March 19 and 20, 1943, by the Norfolk and Portsmouth Offices of Civilian Defense, the Norfolk Nutrition Committee, and the Portsmouth Red Cross Canteen Volunteers, under the direction of a representative of the Nutrition in Industry Division, and with the cooperation of the local branches of the Virginia State Restaurant Association, the Chamber of Commerce, etc.

These workers made personal calls on the managers and owners of eating places to obtain answers to a series of questions contained in a survey form prepared by this Department.

The required information was given freely by the operators. They expressed the hope that some practical assistance could be given to them, as they could not without help, work out a satisfactory solution to the feeding problem in this congested area.

The extent of the problem is indicated by the fact that according to an estimate made from figures obtained from the Norfolk and Portsmouth Chambers of Commerce, there was on January 1, 1943, a population of approximately 375,321 in Norfolk and Portsmouth as against 195,077, according to the April 1940 census. Not only has the population almost doubled but in addition there are thousands of sailors -- (7,000 to 40,000) coming to both Norfolk and Portsmouth every

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1000
110

evening. Although these men are well fed on shipboard, they naturally seek a change of food and also enjoy beer and a snack. Besides this, there are hundreds of visitors each day who come to see these sailors and they too must be fed. These two factors further contribute to the already serious over-taxing of the eating facilities and make the food, labor, and equipment shortage of the restaurants more acute.

There are approximately 62,000 civilian industrial workers in the area of whom about 50,000 are employed in the U. S. Navy Yard and subordinate establishments. It is true that feeding facilities are provided for these workers in the Navy shipyards, etc., but many workers necessarily have to secure at least two meals daily in public eating places as the housing conditions are such that apartments with cooking facilities are not to be had and a majority of the workers are lodged in rooming houses.

The restaurants surveyed included all types of establishments in which food was served to be consumed on the premises. The establishments surveyed comprised a cross-section of the industry and included such types of public eating places as service restaurants, cafeterias, lunch counters, hotel dining rooms, drug stores, tea rooms in department stores, and delicatessens and bakeries serving meals. Eating places serving only sandwiches and short orders, such as hamburgers and frankfurters, were included as well as the restaurants which served complete meals.

It is obvious that the restaurants are over-crowded and that there is great difficulty in obtaining service especially during the week-ends and after pay day. Some workers must resort to hamburger stands, lunch bars, and beer halls serving sandwiches since those restaurants serving complete meals have inadequate facilities to serve the greatly increased population which is dependent on public eating places.

The result of the questionnaire supports the general impressions obtained from observations of conditions of over-crowding and lack of facilities.

Pre-war statistics for the country as a whole indicate that 25 percent of the Nation's daily meals are served in restaurants. Data obtained in this survey (Exhibits A, B, and C) indicate that 40 meals out of every 100 eaten in this area daily are served in restaurants.

While meals eaten by transients account for a large proportion of this higher percentage in the surveyed area, it seems likely that a great part of it is due to the fact that so many of the war workers are dependent upon restaurants.

If the percentage of meals served in restaurants in the area increased from 25 percent to 40 percent while the population doubled, then the number of meals now being served is three times as great as before the war period. It hardly seems likely that the expansion in restaurant facilities during this time could have been adequate to handle such an increase.

Exhibits D and F reveal that the restaurants in the surveyed area require assistance in order to maintain their present status and that unless such assistance is given they may not be able to continue serving the number of meals now being served.

It seems clear that the restaurants in the area cannot be expected to substantially increase the number of meals now being served unless they receive assistance in respect to labor shortage, and equipment replacement. It is assumed that adequate food supplies can be assured to the area.

If the food allocated to the area is based on the increased population, the quota set will have to take into consideration the constantly large transient population of members of the armed forces and sailors in the port.

Restaurants report, in many cases, that they have been forced to close for 1 or 2 days each week because of shortages of labor and food.

The restaurants reported shortages of labor in 53 percent of the cases. Assistance to the restaurants in this respect would greatly help to assure the maintenance of present sales. Without such assistance it seems unlikely that present volume can be appreciably expanded.

Equipment replacements and additions are required to maintain or increase sales. It is indicated in Exhibit F that:

344 restaurants require equipment costing up to \$250.00 per restaurant
106 restaurants require equipment costing from \$250 to \$1000 per restaurant

The minor equipment replacement usually includes some addition to the silver, china, pots, pans, etc.

In some cases the addition of a few chairs, tables, gas ranges to replace coal stoves, coffee urns, etc. would permit an increase in number of persons served.

The conclusion is that the restaurants in these areas should be granted the privilege of obtaining the needed additional equipment and replacements to maintain present facilities.

New and replacement equipment will not in itself insure an increase in the number of persons served daily. The restaurants have indicated, as shown in Exhibit G, that such assistance would enable them to increase customer count by 2.8 percent.

If assistance in equipment is coupled with adequate food supply and labor so that operations can be conducted on a fairly normal basis the possible increase should be considerably greater than the 2.8 percent indicated. As shown in Exhibit E the daily customer turnover in these restaurants is 8.8. Where there is a great demand for restaurant accommodations, as in this area, a rate of turnover substantially greater than 8.8 should be aimed for.

Our findings indicate that the operators are not interested in undertaking any major expansion of present facilities. Most of the restaurants are small and cannot expand to any great extent, space on the main street is scarce and expensive, industrial district locations offer no assurance of continuing profitable operations, and owners appear to be hesitant about making a large investment under uncertain wartime conditions.

It is suggested that restaurants of the proper size and type, in suitable locations, should be set up by some official authority to be reserved for the exclusive use of the sailors and members of the armed forces. This, it is expected, will to a great extent relieve the pressure on existing commercial restaurants so that they will be able to take care of many who otherwise cannot be properly fed.

It is suggested that immediate assistance be given to present restaurants to enable them to overcome their shortages in labor and food supplies, and equipment inadequacies.

When operations in the restaurants have been brought as near to normalcy as possible steps can be taken by local authorities and trade associations to create new facilities to take care of the overflow which cannot then be handled by existing restaurants.

Exhibit A.	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>Norfolk</u>	<u>Portsmouth</u>
	As at January 1, 1943	300,321	75,000
	April 1940 U.S.Census	<u>144,332</u>	<u>50,745</u>
	INCREASE	<u>155,989</u>	<u>24,255</u>
	92%	108%	50%

Exhibit B.	<u>MEALS SERVED PER DAY IN RESTAURANTS</u>		
	At time of survey	395,517	53,969
	One year ago	<u>269,730</u>	<u>26,643</u>
	INCREASE	<u>125,787</u>	<u>27,326</u>
	52%	47%	102%

Exhibit C.	<u>DAILY RESTAURANT MEALS PER PERSON OF POPULATION</u>		
	1.2	1.3	.7
	Restaurant Meals Per Hundred	Total Daily Meals	
	40	43	23
	Total Number of Restaurants		
	860	750	110
	Number of Restaurants Surveyed		
	382	289	93

Exhibit D.	<u>RESTAURANTS REPORTING LABOR SHORTAGE</u>		
	204	155	49
	53%	53%	53%

Exhibit E.	<u>DATA AS TO RESTAURANTS SURVEYED</u>				
	<u>Norfolk</u>		<u>Portsmouth</u>		
	<u>District</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Seats</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Seats</u>
	Factory	32	1,117	15	844
	Business	158	9,839	66	3,063
	Residential	99	4,642	12	474
		<u>289</u>	<u>15,598</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>4,381</u>
	Average Seating Capacity	54			47
	Meals per day in surveyed restaurants		131,839		44,974
	Daily turnover per seat	8.8	8 $\frac{1}{2}$		10 $\frac{1}{4}$

Exhibit F.

	<u>Norfolk</u>		<u>Portsmouth</u>	
<u>RESTAURANTS REQUIRING EQUIPMENT ADDITIONS TO MAINTAIN OR INCREASE SALES</u>				
<u>District</u>	<u>Up to \$250</u>	<u>From \$250 to \$1000</u>	<u>Up to \$250</u>	<u>From \$250 to \$1000</u>
Factory	10	4	11	2
Business	75	16	22	22
Residential	31	9	3	2
	116	29	36	26
Percent of number surveyed	40%	10%	40%	28%
Estimated number of total restaurants requiring equipment	300	75	44	31

Exhibit G.

NORFOLK RESTAURANTS REQUIRING EQUIPMENT

ANTICIPATED INCREASE IN PERSONS SERVED

<u>District</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>Cost to \$250 Total</u>				<u>\$250-\$1000 Total</u>			
		<u>B</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>Meals</u>	<u>Units</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>Meals</u>
Factory	10		25	25	50	4	125	150	450
Business	75	251	896	811	1,958	16	292	440	1,174
Residential	31	90	105	105	300	9	125	125	250
TOTAL	116	341	1026	941	2,308	29	417	715	1,874

Estimated Total possible meal increase 6,924 5,622

PERCENT OF MEALS SERVED

In Norfolk 1.7%
In Portsmouth 10.1%
In combined area 2.8%

